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MAHMUD AZ-ZAMAKHSHARIY'S SCHOLARLY LEGACY: EDUCATIONAL, ETHICAL, AND PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS

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ANNOTATION

This article analyzes Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy not only as a scholar and poet recognized for his scientific-philosophical works and literary creativity but also as a prominent religious scholar renowned across the Islamic world. The pedagogical aspects of his ideas concerning ethics, education, the pure Muslim, and society are examined in detail.

KEYWORDS: *linguistics, lexicography, literature, Aruz, geography, Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, education, moral upbringing, ethics, the pure Muslim, speech culture, integrity and purity, wise sayings, admonitions, pedagogical views, spiritual and moral perfection.*

Our great ancestors linked the issue of human spiritual and moral perfection to knowledge. This approach has deep meaning and logical foundation. Indeed, without understanding the mysteries of existence and without effectively utilizing the capacities of the mind, it is impossible to attain the status of a mature individual. For this reason, scholars in all eras have focused great attention on studying the essence, necessity, value, methods, and tools of education, as well as the objectives expected from it. This is particularly evident in the works of Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy, a prominent thinker of the Eastern Renaissance.

Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy left behind a rich and extensive legacy for future generations. He authored comprehensive works on linguistics, lexicography, literature, Aruz, geography, Tafsir, Hadith, and Fiqh, many of which have survived to this day.

Works on various issues of linguistics and grammar occupy a significant place in his creative output. For instance, during his stay in Mecca, Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy spent two years (1119–1121) writing his famous work on Arabic grammar, Al-Mufassal. This book has long been recognized as an important resource for studying Arabic syntax and morphology, gaining fame in both the East and the West. Even in its time, Al-Mufassal garnered great attention among Arab communities and was widely used as a primary manual for mastering the Arabic language.

A slightly condensed and summarized version of Al-Mufassal is known as Al-Unmuzaj (The Model).
t should be noted that during the reign of the Khorezmshahs, science and culture flourished significantly. The rulers, especially Khorezmshah Atsiz, held scholars, poets, and writers in high esteem. Atsiz himself was a talented, enlightened, and cultured individual with a deep interest in literature and knowledge. His era is known for various initiatives aimed at the advancement of science and education. This might explain why Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy dedicated his work Muqaddimatu-l-Adab to this enlightened ruler.

The work consists of five major sections, discussing nouns, verbs, conjunctions, noun declensions, and verb conjugations. In some versions, Arabic words are accompanied by Persian translations, in others by Turkic, and even Mongolic translations. There is also a version of this work translated into the Khorezmian language.

Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy's Asasu-l-Balaghah (Foundations of Eloquence) focuses primarily on lexicography. It examines the eloquence and richness of the Arabic language, emphasizing that mastering the art of expressing ideas beautifully with appropriate words requires knowledge of eloquence and rhetoric. This involves proper and contextually accurate use of words, adhering to grammatical rules in speech and writing. The book thoroughly analyzes the main components of literature, idiomatic expressions, and practical ways to apply them.

Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy also authored a topographical work titled Al-Jibal wa-l-Amkina va-l-Miyah or Kitabu Asma'il-Adwiya va-l-Jibal (Mountains, Settlements, and Waters or The Book of Names of Remedies and Mountains). This book lists geographical names in alphabetical order, describing each name as it pertains to a place, mountain, or body of water, followed by an explanation of its origin and associated stories or poetry.

His treatise Atvaqu-z-Zahab fi-l-Mava'iz va-l-Khutab (Golden Strands of Sermons and Speeches) is a didactic work containing 100 moral lessons, virtues, and wise sayings.

The work Rabiy'u-l-Abrar va Nususu-l-Akhyar (The Spring of the Pious and Narratives of the Noble) includes stories, anecdotes, and conversations on literature, history, and other sciences, organized into 97 chapters.

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The scholar's treatise on the Aruz metric system, Al-Qustos fi-l-Aruz (The Criterion of Aruz), is considered an important source. Another of his works, Al-Mustaqsa fi Amsal il-Arab (Comprehensive Collection of Arabic Proverbs), is dedicated to Arabic proverbs and maxims. It explains nearly 3,500 Arabic proverbs in alphabetical order.

His work Al-Faiq fi Gharibi-l-Hadith (Elucidation of Rare Words in Hadith) is also a lexicon, dedicated to difficult and obscure words found in Hadith and literary texts. The words are arranged alphabetically, with explanations of their meanings, supported by poetic or prose examples.

Lastly, Maqamatu-z-Zamakhshariy (The Maqamas of Zamakhshariy) is a collection of moral lessons and advice consisting of 50 chapters (maqamas). Each maqama bears a name such as Maqamatu-l-Marashid (The Maqama of Guidance), Maqamatu-t-Taqva (The Maqama of Piety), Maqamatu-z-Zuhd (The Maqama of Asceticism), Maqamatu-l-Qana'a (The Maqama of Contentment), and Maqamatu-l-'Iffa (The Maqama of Chastity). Each maqama begins with the phrase "Ya Abulqasim" (Oh, Abulqasim).

Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy's Navabigu-l-Kalim (Subtle Expressions) is a work dedicated to moral teachings and wisdom, written with refined taste. He also authored an Arabic diwan that includes lyrical and philosophical poems, qasidas, encomiums, elegies, and poetic letters.

The pinnacle of Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy's works and one of the most renowned in the world of science is Al-Kashshaf, a famous commentary on the Quran. Its full title is Al-Kashshaf al-Haqa'iq at-Tanzil wa Uyuni-l-Aqavil fi Vujuh at-Ta'vil (The Revealer of the Truths of Revelation and the Sources of Interpretations). This work was written over three years (1132–1134) during the scholar's stay in Mecca, as noted in the introduction written by Zamakhshariy himself.

Al-Kashshaf holds a leading position among Quranic commentaries produced across different periods. To this day, it remains an essential guide for many Muslims, particularly scholars in Arab countries. Students at the globally renowned Al-Azhar University in Cairo study the Quran and its interpretation based on Al-Kashshaf, using it as a critical curriculum and manual. This work has been republished multiple times in various cities worldwide. Rare manuscripts of Al-Kashshaf copied during different periods are preserved in Tashkent, specifically in the library of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan and the "Hamid Sulaymanov" collection at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

Indeed, the scholar's scientific legacy and his educational and moral views are of great importance for nurturing spiritually mature and well-rounded individuals today.

In his pedagogical views, Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy seeks to address ethical issues from a rationalist perspective. His aphorisms and advice emphasize the importance of relying on intellect and reason in human behavior. According to him, "Every difficult task is corrected through the efforts of the wise, just as the earth and the heavens revolve only around their respective poles." He believed that a person's actions should align with reason, and this is evident in his ideas on learning, education, and moral upbringing. "Be a scholar, or act based on knowledge, or at least be someone who listens to and learns from knowledge—but do not be the fourth, for you will fall into ruin", he warned.

Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy harshly criticized ignorance and illiteracy, considering them among the lowest human flaws. He remarked, "Becoming knowledgeable is as arduous as climbing a high mountain, yet descending from it is easy. Ignorance and illiteracy may seem like deep springs, but they bring endless challenges and suffering". He also noted, "An intelligent person strives for virtuous deeds that reason and logic demand, whereas a fool, faced with initial failure, loses motivation, shows no initiative, and ends up like an overburdened porter collapsing in fatigue".

The scholar encouraged honest labor and self-sufficiency. He advocated that individuals engage in a profession and develop a habit of diligent work from a young age. "Farming and sowing crops bring prosperity and blessings, enveloping one's community in abundance", he stated, praising the efforts of farmers as among the most respected in society.

According to Zamakhshariy, essential traits of a morally upright person include humility, generosity, and courage: "A noble individual, though defeated, does not lose their dignity, nor do they feel humiliated by hardship or distress". He emphasized that humanity and humility bring moral beauty and good fortune to such individuals.

Zamakhshariy believed that Allah created mountains, stones, living beings, seas, and deserts, and that He is always aware of human deeds and conduct. Thus, he urged people to engage in righteous acts, be just, oppose evil, and stand for truth. He stated, "Never forget the all-seeing Allah in your actions, be just in all your dealings, and do not oppress others". The scholar particularly called on state officials and rulers to uphold justice and truth, avoid harming the people, and refrain from tyranny. "Any leader who does not govern with justice and fairness", Zamakhshariy emphasized, "will face severe trials and tribulations. However, he lamented that many of his contemporaries did not follow the path of truth or fulfill their promises, yet he firmly believed in the ultimate triumph of truth: Just as sunlight cannot be concealed, the light of truth cannot be extinguished.

As a prominent linguist, Zamakhshariy paid great attention to the culture of speech and social etiquette. His first advice to people was to speak sparingly, as excessive talk is displeasing to others. "Excessive speech and arrogance are unforgivable", he declared, explaining that too much talking irritates listeners and cannot be pardoned. He believed that everyone should control themselves, reflect before speaking, and avoid verbosity. "If you cannot guard your tongue, you have handed its reins to the devil. Guard your tongue and avoid unnecessary speech", he advised. He further noted that excessive talking and

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idle chatter diminish a person's dignity and lead to undesirable consequences. While physical wounds may heal, the wounds caused by the tongue cannot be mended, he concluded.

Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy exalted integrity and purity, considering them among the highest virtues of a person. He described Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the most upright and pure individual, urging people to have faith in him. He emphasized that honesty and purity adorn human character and lead one toward perfection, stating, "An honest and pure person will always be at peace and tranquility, while one who betrays or commits wrongdoing will face destruction."

The scholar also remarked, "A person of fairness refrains from usurping the rights of others and ensures everyone receives what they deserve. In contrast, an oppressor takes pleasure in seizing the rights of others and exerts all efforts to retain them." He further added, "A person who embraces justice and fairness in their heart will never commit oppression or injustice. An unjust and unfair individual is like someone trapped in a filthy swamp, unable to escape." Zamakhshariy consistently encouraged people to be just and honest.

Having traveled extensively and observed various lands, Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy encountered the good and the bad and learned to distinguish friends from foes. Thus, he held sincere and loyal friends in high regard. "Be aware," he stated, "that losing a noble, honorable, and loyal person is harder than death for a man." He called on people to cherish true friends and brothers, treating them with respect and appreciation. The scholar advised choosing virtuous, wise, and intelligent individuals as friends from among various groups. To the question of what constitutes a true friend, he provided a detailed response, stating that someone who extends a helping hand during difficult times and shares in one's sorrow is a true friend. He noted, "The most cherished and respected individuals reveal themselves during moments of grief and hardship, as such trials bring them closer, like siblings."

In his treatise Navabig' ul-Kalim, Zamakhshariy extensively discussed the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the cultivation of noble character, and the upbringing of a perfect human. He condemned negative traits in individuals. According to him, a person's inner and outer being, heart, and tongue must align, as this is the foundation of generosity and integrity. "The worst among people are the miserly; the laziest and most contemptible are the sluggish," he declared. He also asserted, "Arrogance adds neither value nor dignity to anyone; it is nothing more than wind swirling inside a storm."

Particularly, Zamakhshariy criticized impure, boastful, and ignorant arrogant individuals. He urged them to abandon procrastination and hastiness driven by the devil and to act thoughtfully and wisely in performing virtuous and righteous deeds: "Dedicate yourself wholeheartedly to good and beneficial actions, and avoid postponing them with thoughts of "I will do it later". Act not with impulsiveness misled by the devil, but with reflection and discernment".

In summary, Mahmud az-Zamakhshariy gained renown across the Islamic world not only as a scholar and poet through his scientific and philosophical works and literary creativity but also as a prominent religious scholar. His wise sayings, admonitions, and teachings on high moral values, the pure Muslim, knowledge, and ethics undoubtedly contribute to the development of well-rounded and morally upright individuals.

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